department and leave the whole concern to private enterprise. Government do not want to resuscitate the old system unless there is any pressing necessity for it.

51. Needs of the people of Kuttanad in respect of agriculture and means of communication.

Mr. Krishna Aiyar Narayana Aiyar (Member, Ambalapuzha Taluk) began by thanking the Government for the attention paid to the improvement of *punja* cultivation in Kuttanad and stated that there were many more things to be done in the direction of helping the *punja* cultivators.

The Member stated that quicklime formed the chief manure in *punja* cultivation and the recent order of Government selling the right to collect quicklime from the backwaters had caused great hardship to the cultivators. He prayed that such indirect taxation on the people might be done away with.

The Member drew the attention of the Government to the fact that indigenous articles of manure were being freely exported from the State and suggested that a duty might be imposed on such articles. He then referred to a rumour that Government were going to grant monopolies in respect of river sand and earth on *porambokes* and added that, if that rumour was true, the progress of *punja* cultivation would be seriously retarded by the grant of such monopolies.

The next point urged by the Member was the want of irrigational facilities in North Travancore. The canals and other waterways in Kuttanad had already been encroached upon and it was, in the Member's opinion, necessary that a special irrigation engineer should be appointed for Kuttanad. He drew the attention of the Government to the need for opening a canal from Changanachery to Alleppey and a road from Tiruvalla to Ambalapuzha. He also complained that the road from Quilon to Alleppey was not receiving any attention.

The Member complained that the present rules regulating the grant of agricultural loans did not serve to help the poor ryots, and that an attempt to secure a loan involved a considerable amount of time, delay and expenditure. With a view to remove that evil the Member suggested the opening of agricultural banks. He then dwelt at length on the advantages of delivering lectures and holding exhibitions on agricultural subjects in several places in Kuttanad with a view to educate the people in improved agricultural methods. The establishment of more experimental farms in unproductive areas was also urged.

Lastly, the Member brought to the notice of Government the need for exempting all canoes used by *bona fide* agriculturists from the operation of the Public Canals and Public Ferries Regulation.

Dewan's reply.— You have spoken on a large number of matters of which I have had no previous notice. I shall, however, try to give you a reply.

In regard to quicklime, it is true that we have given a monopoly for some years in the Kumarakam area, *i. e.*, up to Vaikam. Beyond Vaikam, there is no monopoly. I think the impression is wrong that the monopoly causes hardship to the people, because we have taken care to fix the price of the material. The Director of Agriculture reports that the price in all the places is the same except in Quilon where it has gone up by half a *fanam* per *para*. Government are taking only the middleman's profit, and the arrangement does not affect the ryots prejudicially. If, on the expiry of the current lease, it is found that the ryots suffer, the matter will certainly be reconsidered.

In regard to the maintenance of canals and bunds, it is a matter for which Irrigation Boards should be formed. The Irrigation Regulation has been revised with a view to enable the ryots of Kuttanad also to form such boards, and the Land Revenue Commissioner has been asked to meet the ryots of the locality and submit draft rules. These rules, when received, will be published in the Gazette for public criticism, and then passed eventually. With the subsidy the boards may get from Government the ryots should be able to carry out such works much more promptly than the Department of Public Works.

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In regard to the canal from Changanachery to Alleppey, I understand that the work is not so formidable as it was once thought to be. The matter is being examined by the Department of Public Works. As regards the road from Quilon to Alleppey, you are not right in saying that Government are not devoting any attention to it. Every year, a large amount is being set apart for the road. Last year a sum of Rs. 40,000 was spent over it. The Tiruvalla-Ambalapuzha road is only a branch road and it is not as important as the main road from Quilon to Alleppey. We are completing the main road section by section, and, when it is completed, branch roads like the Tiruvalla-Ambalapuzha road will have their turn.

Agricultural loans are mainly intended for the poor, and if the poor do not take advantage of them, the blame does not lie with the Government. Out of the one lakh of rupees ear-marked for these loans last year Rs. 96,000 were actually advanced. Applications from the poor will certainly be preferred to those from the rich. The latter can command money in the open market, while the former cannot. I have no faith in agricultural banks. These banks have proved a failure wherever they have been tried. Co-operative Societies ought to be the appropriate agency for the poor to obtain these loans. I shall have the matter examined by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies.

As regards lectures and exhibitions, we had a Public Lecture Committee which we had to abolish, because it did not do much work. The question as to how to organise useful public lectures is engaging the attention of Government. As for agricultural exhibitions, Government will be glad to give financial help to private exhibitions. We are providing money for such help in the budget every year, and we have been giving a grant to the Ochira exhibition whenever it is held. Demonstration is also being done on ryots' lands by the Agricultural Department. As I have already said, I have asked the Director of Agriculture to prepare a scheme whereby the general public will be attracted to the agricultural farms on occasions of harvest. The people will take their own produce to the farms on such occasions and prizes will be awarded for the best exhibits. It is hoped that the scheme, when adopted, would popularise the farms and the improved methods introduced in them. As matters stand, it is regrettable to note that these farms, which are established and maintained by Government at great expense, are visited by very few people.

In regard to canoes, those under one ton capacity are exempt from the operation of the Public Canals and Public Ferries Regulation.

Member.—Bigger canoes used for agricultural purposes also require to be exempted.

Dewan.—It is difficult to distinguish between canoes used for *bona fide* agricultural purposes and those plying for hire. So we have exempted all canoes below one ton capacity.

Member.—There is also one other point, *viz.*, the supply of *Era* grass and shrubs for bunds.

Dewan.—That is a matter of detail.

52. Aids to the agriculturists of Kuttanad.

Mr. Ouseph Joseph Kunju (Member, Changanachery Taluk) made a few preliminary observations on the need for making Travancore self-sufficient in the matter of paddy production. He said that, if full advantage was taken of Kuttanad, a good deal more of paddy could be produced from Kuttanad alone. He then proceeded to describe the physical features of Kuttanad and explained how that tract of land was composed of parts of the Ambalapuzha, Changanachery, Kottayam, Tiruvalla and Kartikapalli taluks. The people living in Kuttanad and in the adjoining taluks had no identity of interests in any way and all their grievance

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